

## NDAW Public Statement Over Latest Detentions in Egypt



The Network of Democrats in the Arab World (NDAW) is following up with utmost concern the developments of the clashes between the Egyptian regime on the one hand and opposition and civil society on the other hand. After the confrontation between authorities and the judges and between authorities and journalists, Kifaya Movement and others and after denying recognition to a number of parties that submitted papers for a licence, including Al-Wasat (Centre) Party, the latest developments of this clash included increasing detentions and trials against the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) Movement. The number of the detainees, their ranks (some of them are top leaders in the movement), and the seriousness of the charges against some of them, which reached charges of plotting to change the regime, all these indications reflect a seemingly radical change in the Egyptian regime's recent policy in its relations with the opposition in general and the Muslim Brotherhood Movement in particular. This may lead to a new round of confrontation between both parties .

We believe in the NDAW that what is happening now in Egypt may be a serious relapse to the path of political openness that Egypt has witnessed throughout the past three years, reaching its peak in 2005 legislative elections, in which the Muslim Brotherhood garnered a fifth of the parliament seats. We considered this at that time as an indication on the political maturity of the Egyptian regime, and a significant development in the Egyptian political life. However, while waiting for bolder steps towards the reform and expanding the democratic practice circle, the last developments came to bring back confusion and question marks and raise eyebrows of pro-democracy activists inside and outside Egypt thinking that Egypt is seemingly returning to situations which weren't, we think, to this country that has a strategic weight and which is badly in need for democracy because it is a main condition for achieving stability and development.

Out of our love to Egypt and due to our sticking to values of human rights and democracy, and due to believing that political disagreements are never settled except through political means, because repression only spawns spites that lead only to violence which in turn rips the civil fabric and establishes a tyrannical conduct, due to all this, we



call on Egyptian authorities to be reasonable and study lessons from the gloomy past, and quietly continue working for merging all sections and powers of the Egyptian society, including Islamists, into the political process. Also, we demand Egyptian authorities to recognize the opposition as a social and political reality and an important factor in pushing the democratic process. Marginalization is an unsuccessful option that will not help in tackling the complicated political and cultural problems that actually require awareness, patience and perseverance.

We also demand Egyptian MB leaders and other opposition powers to wisely stick to the peaceful and institutional option, and avoid any actions that may raise doubts in the credibility of their democratic direction. Adopting the logic of reactions and show of muscles and responding to escalations with similar escalations may get the conflict off limits and may lead to feared traps. Expressing its trust in the movement's wise leadership and its ability to surpassing this new challenge, the NDAW expresses its full solidarity with the Muslim Brotherhood Movement, Al Wasat (Centre Party) and other democratic parties, and we demand detainees released and harassments stopped. We are sure that these and other Egyptian democrats will exert their utmost efforts to prevent Egypt from facing more political and human rights relapses.

Salahuddin Al Gourshi

Coordinator of the NDAW Executive Office

Sep. 5th, 2007